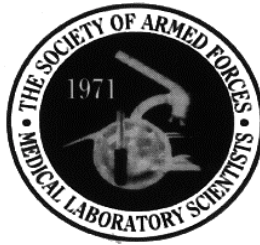




## The Society of Armed Forces Medical Laboratory Scientists (SAFMLS) 2004 Annual Meeting and Exposition: Call For Abstracts

SAFMLS is a non-profit professional society of medical scientists, technologists, technicians, managers and physicians in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Public Health and Department of Veterans Administration. The 2004 conference will be held at the Sheraton in downtown Boston, February 22-27. This year's theme, "Emerging Technologies", will be emphasized in presentations, poster sessions, workshops, and vendor exhibitions. This educational meeting gives presenters the opportunity to



introduce their ideas and research findings to leading military medical personnel. The Directory of DoD Public Health Laboratory Services will also be presenting detailed information regarding the use of this website. Interested participants in any of these activities are reminded that applications and abstracts are due December 15, 2003. Registration for the 2004 SAFMLS conference begins January 12. Visit the SAFMLS website for more

information: [SAFMLS Conference](#)

## Influenza A-Fujian-H3N2 Strain Spreading Fast, Flu Shots Strongly Encouraged

Each year, more than 36,000 Americans die of complications from influenza, while an additional 114,000 are hospitalized. This year, a majority of the cases have been caused by a different strain from the 3 selected for this year's vaccine. H3N2 strains are the most severe of all Influenza strains, leading to more deaths and hospitalizations than any other. Four children in Colorado, ranging from ages 21 months to 15 years, have died from the H3N2 strain in November alone. Another child's death has been reported in Minnesota. Even though the flu shot does not protect against this virus specifically, vaccinations are still recommended since it will most likely offer some protection. CDC guidelines recommend that all children and adults over the age of 50 get the flu vaccine. Adults with respiratory ailments, chronic medical conditions, and all



health-care workers are considered at high risk and should get vaccinated as well. With a high volume of people traveling worldwide this time of year, this strain is expected to spread quickly. Last December, hundreds of sailors aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt caught the flu as the virus hit the aircraft carrier during exercises in the Atlantic. The spreading of viruses aboard ships is common because of the close quarters the sailors keep. This also holds true for troops stationed overseas. With the Mayo Clinic predicting the worst flu season in 30 years, vaccinations will severely cut down on the number of deaths and hospitalizations this winter. More information on Influenza can be found on the Directory of DoD Public Health

Laboratory Services. Current data on this season's influenza outbreaks can be found at the DoD-Geis (Global Emerging Infections System) website under the [DoD Global Influenza Surveillance Weekly Update](#).



**The Directory of DoD Public Health Laboratory Services Wishes Everyone a Safe, Healthy, and Happy Holiday Season! Don't Forget to Support Those Who Can't Be With Their Families This Season- Send a Holiday Card to the Troops Overseas!**